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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Forty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 502nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 17 October 1995, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MCHUMO (United Republic of Tanzania)

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General debate (continued)

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GE.95-03465 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (agenda item 4) (continued)

1. Mr. PATEL (Malawi) said that the voluntary repatriation of the Mozambican refugees in Malawi begun in November 1993 after the Rome Peace Agreement had been completed. The few small groups left in the country had become self-reliant and no longer required international protection or assistance. The Tripartite Commission of the Governments of Malawi and Mozambique, on the one hand, and UNHCR, on the other, was closely monitoring the transition phase and the cessation clauses would be safely applied as soon as all conditions had been met.

2. In a mammoth and successful programme like the one conducted in Malawi, a number of lessons were learnt. Although it was one of the poorest countries in the world, Malawi had accepted with open arms over 1 million Mozambican refugees. The hospitality which had been shown by the Malawians for over nine years had created a harmonious relationship between hosts and refugees and had also greatly facilitated the work of the international organizations. The Malawians' exemplary conduct was worth emulating, considering that many wealthier countries refused to accept refugees. Recognition should also be given to the UNHCR staff, whose efforts had been the key to the success of the programme.

3. When visiting Malawi in April, the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees had confirmed UNHCR's intention to help the Government of Malawi rehabilitate the environment in the refugee-impacted areas. The land given to the refugees at great cost to the local population had been seriously degraded and more than 100,000 hectares had been deforested. Some of the land might even become irretrievable if steps were not taken immediately. The people in all the refugee-impacted areas were virtually unable to produce anything from the land, which had originally been the basis of their livelihood.

4. While applauding the assistance it received from friendly Governments and other agencies on general environmental problems, his Government drew their attention to the need to mobilize resources for direct and swift action on the impacted areas. The cost of an environmental rehabilitation programme for 12 districts that had hosted refugees had been evaluated and various projects had been prepared for donors to consider. While awaiting a favourable reaction, the Malawian Government hoped that UNHCR would continue the afforestation programme launched a few years before and that it would also continue to play a catalytic role in soliciting assistance for environmental rehabilitation projects. In that connection, his delegation had been deeply touched by the commitment made by the High Commissioner in her statement to the Executive Committee.

5. The Malawian authorities had learned from experience that when a large group of people fled from a war situation, there were often armed individuals among them. On learning that they would be returning home, some former Mozambican combatants had sold their weapons cheaply to Malawians. Those weapons were being used by unscrupulous Malawians to terrorize and rob people.

The problem was worsening. Unfortunately, that situation confirmed the position of certain Governments that refused to accept refugees, the international conventions notwithstanding.

6. As the international community celebrated the successful return of the Mozambican refugees to their home, Malawi was experiencing yet another kind of influx of asylum-seekers. The new arrivals numbered over 971 and the Government had opened a camp for them north-east of the capital. Among them were many Rwandan refugees who had been turned back at the borders of countries close to Rwanda. Malawi was a signatory to the various international instruments and it had always opened its doors to those fleeing persecution. But to help the international community punish the abhorrent acts of genocide in Rwanda, the Malawian Government had decided to study the cases of 45 Rwandan families currently in Malawi to establish the extent of their involvement in the horrendous acts committed in their country.

7. Lastly, his delegation noted with satisfaction the transition to democracy taking place in southern Africa. Once peace had come to Angola, the region would cease to be a refugee-producing region; he hoped it would then be viewed by the international community as an appropriate arena for investment and development. In conclusion, he condemned the deplorable attitude of certain Governments, which applied discriminatory policies to refugees. Refugees should be treated equally, whatever their race, sex or religion, especially with regard to resettlement.

8. Mr. BLAVO (Ghana) said that, in 1990, Ghana had for the first time experienced a large influx of refugees owing to the civil war in Liberia. Their number, originally 10,000, now stood at 15,000. In addition, generalized conflict in Togo in 1993 and 1994 and the consequent disruption of law and order had led a large number of Togolese refugees to seek refuge in Ghana. About 85,000 of them were currently being assisted by UNHCR, which had stood by Ghana in both emergencies. The Ghanaian Government was sincerely grateful. Refugees in Ghana generally lived in settlements. However, about 20,000 other refugees had spontaneously settled in various districts of the country without seeking UNHCR or government assistance.

9. In keeping with Ghana's obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, all refugees in Ghana enjoyed freedom of movement within the country and freedom of association with nationals. They had access to public utilities and social services. They benefited in particular from subsidized health care and their children attended public schools. They had the opportunity to work and some headed small enterprises. However, despite the efforts being made in the income-generating sector, the number of beneficiaries remained small.

10. In 1992, the Government of Ghana had promulgated the Act governing Refugee Matters, which had established the Refugee Board under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior. The Board had responsibility for all refugee matters in the country, including the granting of refugee status. In order to cooperate fully with NGOs, the Board needed to strengthen its institutional and personnel capacity. He appealed to UNHCR for assistance in that respect. Prospects for the repatriation of the refugees in Ghana were encouraging. For the Togolese refugees, that had been made possible by a number of

confidence-building measures, including the 1994 Amnesty Law and the Agreement of 12 August 1995 between the Government of Togo and UNHCR. Campaigns had begun in the refugee community to inform it of guarantees set out for their security and for material assistance for their rehabilitation.

11. Under the leadership of President Rawlings, who was also the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, Ghana had played and continued to play a pivotal role in the peace-making process in Liberia. Those efforts had borne fruit with the conclusion of the Abuja Peace Agreement the previous August. Ghana therefore called on the international community and the States in the subregion to help the Liberian people achieve true and lasting peace, which would lessen the burden on all concerned and lead to the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees in Ghana and other neighbouring countries. A pledging conference for the reconstruction of Liberia was planned for Friday, 27 October 1995, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. He hoped that the Executive Committee would give full support to the High Commissioner in her search for the resources to reintegrate Liberian returnees.

12. Mr. KAMARA (Sierra Leone) said that positive developments in some African countries had made it possible for many refugees and displaced persons to return home. That was not the case in Sierra Leone, where the peace and conciliation initiatives being made by the United Nations, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States and other organizations had not been welcomed with the same spirit of cooperation by all the parties involved.

13. Continued rebel activities in Sierra Leone had resulted in increased insecurity, reduced access to large areas of Sierra Leone, internal displacement of entire communities and separation of children from their families, with some coerced by the rebels into taking up arms. Although the conflict had sparked a refugee outflow of between 300,000 and 400,000 Sierra Leoneans to neighbouring Guinea and Liberia, the major preoccupation was the care and support of between 1.5 and 2 million internally displaced Sierra Leoneans. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that at least 30,000 civilians were living outside the urban centres, behind rebel lines in eastern Sierra Leone. The international community's seeming lack of interest towards those people, who were surviving only by the coping mechanisms of the local population, was a matter of great concern to Sierra Leoneans. Insecurity along the main roads of the country had made it impossible to supply humanitarian assistance beyond the western area, so that, of the 1 million people who had registered for food aid from WFP and CRS, only about 65 per cent were receiving food aid. At the end of July 1995, relief agencies had been able to reach only 12 per cent of their total case-load. Despite the promises, the response to the latest Consolidated Appeal by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs had been disappointing. His delegation therefore solemnly appealed to the Executive Committee for support in bringing the grave humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone to the attention of the international community.

14. Aware that, as long as the war continued, the possibility of repatriation would remain a dream, the National Provisional Ruling Council Government would use every available means to persuade the rebels to end the war. A number of

steps had already been taken to prepare for free elections. An Interim National Electoral Commission had been established. One of its first steps had been to convene a Consultative Conference, at which 15 political parties had registered for the parliamentary and presidential elections to be held in 1996. The ban on political activities had been lifted and he could safely say that the country was on the road to democracy.

15. Mr. MALUNGO (Angola), congratulating the staff of UNHCR on the very sensitive work it was doing in various parts of the world, said that his Government, in cooperation with UNDP, had organized a round table on 25 and 26 September 1995 in which the President of the Republic, Mr. dos Santos, and the President of UNITA, Mr. Savimbi, had taken part and at which a programme of community rehabilitation and national reconciliation had been submitted for the period 1996-1997. Thanks to generous support from the international community, the programme would aim at helping communities to resume food production, repair roads and other basic infrastructures and restore services such as drinking water supplies, primary health care and education.

16. The Angolan Government had also decided to give priority to settling the problem of the refugees' return. The number of persons involved was estimated to be 311,000, 83,000 of whom would be repatriated under the auspices of UNHCR. The repatriation programme would require financing of approximately $44 million: $7,160,000 for 1995, $28,300,000 for 1996 and $8,600,000 for 1997. Such an influx of refugees, which was inevitable because most of the people in question were experiencing hardships in their countries of asylum, would not be an easy matter, for most of the original regions were war-ravaged or infested with mines. Most of the refugee population would return home spontaneously and that trend was likely to intensify. For that reason, Angola joined UNHCR's appeal for the restoration of basic infrastructures and services and the establishment of conditions conducive to the refugees' return and reintegration.

17. In view of all those difficulties, Angola again appealed to the generosity of the international community in supporting the programme, for the country's political and economic stability would in large part depend on the success of the reintegration of the refugees, internally displaced persons and demobilized soldiers into society.

18. Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland), endorsing the views expressed by the High Commissioner in her opening statement, said that providing protection to displaced persons in order to find long-term solutions, if possible in the country of origin, would certainly contribute to solving one of the most serious problems of the last decade of the twentieth century. The fact that the financial pledges made in 1994 had already been effectively met - an exceptional situation within the United Nations system - showed clearly that Member States approved of UNHCR's working methods and programmes.

19. Since 1991, when Poland had acceded to both the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, massive refugee emergencies had taken place throughout the world. During that period, Poland had not been affected by influxes of refugees, but the authorities had made a point of offering assistance and protection to refugees from the former Yugoslavia in 1992. Poland had also agreed to play a leading role in a working group entrusted with assistance in

the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since acceding to the relevant international instruments, Poland has gradually been building the legal and institutional infrastructure required for their implementation. The new legislation, once in force, would provide the Polish authorities with a solid basis for dealing with any new refugee situation.

20. Finally, he expressed the satisfaction of his delegation and of the Polish authorities with their ongoing contacts and collaboration with UNHCR and its liaison office in Warsaw. He would like to see that cooperation strengthened, in particular with regard to the integration of refugees.

21. Mr. ULUÇEVIK (Turkey) noted that, since the end of the cold war, the number of victims of man-made disasters had increased considerably, leading to ever larger numbers of refugees and displaced persons. There were currently 30 million people in various parts of the world who were of concern to UNHCR.

22. The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina alone represented one of the worst human tragedies of modern history. At a time when the crime of genocide was being committed against the Bosnians with impunity, UNHCR had to cope with over 1 million refugees and displaced persons in the area. Now that progress was being made towards a negotiated settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the tasks awaiting UNHCR were no less challenging. In that connection, he welcomed UNHCR's willingness to promote the organized return of the refugees and displaced persons and agreed with the High Commissioner that humanitarian issues must be made part and parcel of a peace agreement.

23. With regard to international protection, Turkey believed that the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol contained the necessary legal elements for protecting those fleeing "en masse" from internal disturbances and armed conflicts and that solutions should be sought within the existing framework. From the practical point of view, he noted that the great majority of refugees were currently being hosted in developing and least developed countries, while access to industrialized countries was becoming more and more restrictive and selective.

24. The subject of statelessness was an important one and he commended UNHCR on the study it was conducting on that subject, which was a long-forgotten problem of private international law. He also praised UNHCR's efforts to make international refugee law widely known and supported UNHCR's educational programmes, especially those aimed at women and children.

25. He believed that the maintenance of security and the preservation of law and order in the refugee camps were of cardinal importance. Any action or omission which might facilitate armed activities in or around refugee camps aimed at destabilizing Governments or any other hostile activity which might endanger the safety and stability of States was incompatible with the civilian and humanitarian character of the camps.

26. Owing to its critical geographical location, Turkey had always been directly affected by population movements from the neighbouring countries of the Balkans, the Caucasus and northern Iraq. Despite the strains that such movements brought to bear on its economy and resources, Turkey had always

hosted refugees, who at present numbered approximately 30,000. The massive influx of refugees from northern Iraq in 1991 had resulted in serious challenges and devastation in the country, but UNHCR's efforts and contribution had been exemplary. That experience had once again proved that voluntary repatriation was the durable solution for refugee movements.

27. Turkey was prepared to make its contribution in bringing solutions to the humanitarian issues being raised in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Various Turkish NGOs were already implementing a project for the construction of prefabricated houses in Zenica. Turkey had also assumed the role of coordinator of the joint efforts of the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference through the Assistance Mobilization Group in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

28. Mr. GRIFFITHS (Department of Humanitarian Affairs) said that he would refer to three important issues which had already arisen in the debate and which would surely continue to dominate thinking in the months ahead.

29. The first issue was coordination, which made it possible to apply scarce resources and skills in the most effective manner. In that connection, he highlighted two examples where UNHCR had played a very significant role: in the field, in the countries of the Caucasus, where, thanks to the collegiate relationship between UNHCR and DHA, it had been possible to conduct the humanitarian programme without the addition of extra bureaucracy, and at the headquarters level in Geneva, where UNHCR had been a key player in the deliberations of the Task Force of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, chaired by DHA, on the issue of the use of military and civil defence assets in support of humanitarian operations.

30. Secondly, as the High Commissioner had mentioned, the issue of United Nations reform required careful study and an openness to change. The Economic and Social Council had adopted a resolution requiring all the services involved to review ways in which they might improve their performance and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, with its particular responsibilities pursuant to that resolution, was already working with agencies to ensure that the review was undertaken expeditiously and with the fullest participation of all concerned.

31. The third issue concerned the connection between relief, rehabilitation and development work. Part of the mandate of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was to promote the transition between those activities, but it was a commonplace of experience that those activities often took place at the same time rather than in a linear continuum. That presented all with the challenge to learn from the experience of other humanitarian actors and required those funding relief, rehabilitation and development work to relax their funding criteria to reflect the reality of what was needed on the ground.

32. In that connection, he had noted with particular interest the call by the High Commissioner for a "third window" for the funding of emergency rehabilitation activities. The Department looked forward to developing, in cooperation with UNHCR, other agencies and Governments, further ways in which that critical area of performance might be improved. Lastly, he expressed appreciation for the exemplary way in which the High Commissioner had consistently fulfilled her mandate.

33. Mr. SINGH (India) said that India remained firmly committed to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the High Commissioner programme for the international protection of refugees. Its interest in all aspects of the work of UNHCR was rooted in its full support for humanitarian ideals. It had never failed in its responsibility to provide succour and sustenance to refugees, essentially through its own modest resources. Another aspect of its tradition of assistance to refugees was the fact that repatriation had been effected entirely on a voluntary basis through bilateral arrangements with the countries of origin. Tens of thousands of refugees from Sri Lanka and the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh were present in India. Arrangements had been reached with the Governments of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and a voluntary repatriation process was under way.

34. His delegation commended UNHCR on the high quality of the background document on international protection (A/AC.96/850) prepared for the current session of the Executive Committee. The document delineated with precision and depth the range of issues and challenges faced by UNHCR in the discharge of its mandate to provide international protection to all refugees in need. India agreed with the High Commissioner that global efforts were needed to address the entire range of refugee-related problems. It was especially necessary to enhance the security and predictability of protection operations, strengthen international solidarity, support the capacity of host States to receive and protect refugees, seek sustainable solutions to refugee problems within countries of origin to prevent their recurrence and create conditions for the repatriation of refugees in a manner that ensured their safety and established favourable conditions for their reintegration.

35. The root causes of population flows had become increasingly complex and required multifaceted action. International cooperation for development must be increased in order to bridge economic disparities, which were often the cause of migratory flows. Although it was opposed to illegal migration, India believed that a liberal outlook was needed to deal with the problems of refugees and migrants in general. Those problems should be approached on the basis of universal and uniform criteria. In that connection, he was happy to note that the background document prepared by UNHCR underlined the need to address a broad spectrum of legal, political, developmental, security and other related issues in international protection efforts.

36. With regard to the question of internally displaced persons, it should not be forgotten that those involved were within the administrative and territorial jurisdiction of their own States. In any assessment of the situation, the precise circumstances should be carefully and objectively considered. The consent of the State concerned should be an indispensable prerequisite for UNHCR activities.

37. His delegation reiterated its continued support for the High Commissioner's programme. While it was aware of the need to provide UNHCR with adequate resources, it drew attention to the risks involved in any overloading of UNHCR's mandate. The objective should be to strengthen the structure of UNHCR's existing activities in the areas where it had already proved itself.

38. Mr. SANCHEZ ARNAU (Argentina) said that the current session of the UNHCR Executive Committee was particularly important for two reasons. It would have to decide on reforms to be made in the Executive Committee's working methods and would have to adopt the new approaches, restructurings and verification systems needed for the proper functioning of refugee assistance programmes.

39. With regard to the guiding principles of international protection, he welcomed the document submitted by the Secretariat, entitled "Note on International Protection" (A/AC.96/850), which kept open the dialogue between countries and UNHCR in order to correct, through concerted action among States, the legal void that applied to massive influxes of refugees. Emphasis should be placed on prevention and early-warning measures to enable the international community to anticipate population displacements.

40. Case-law and the efforts made by States for decades had led to the establishment of a sound system of protection and national solidarity for coping with the emergency situations of the post-war period and with crises caused by influxes of refugees throughout the world. The American Convention on Human Rights and the Cartagena Declaration, together with other instruments relating to asylum, such as the 1928 Havana Convention and the 1933 Montevideo Convention on Political Asylum, were the Latin American legal contribution to the protection of refugees. Beyond legal instruments and regulations, however, it was the practice of States that worked in favour of respect for fundamental human freedoms, to the extent that States also provided for the protection of persons who were not recognized as refugees in the strict sense of the term, such as internally displaced persons and victims of armed conflicts.

41. The international community was currently torn between two trends: on the one hand, the hope of expanding the scope of protection and, on the other, the temptation to reject. In that connection, he agreed with the High Commissioner that the principle of non-refoulement was not even respected by countries that had the economic means to protect refugees' lives and integrity.

42. The efforts made and enormous sacrifices accepted by the countries of the Great Lakes region, which had hosted millions of refugees, had resulted in a deterioration of the environment that should be closely monitored by the international community, especially as the countries involved did not have the necessary means for correcting those disasters. He noted in that connection that the vast majority of refugees settled in developing, rather than developed, countries.

43. The international community should pay special attention to the vulnerability of refugee women and children as well as to refugees' health. He endorsed the recommendations contained in document EC/SC.2/77 and urged that the specific measures for distributing food to women and protecting them outside the refugee camps should be implemented without delay.

44. Argentina had responded positively to UNHCR's appeal to host large groups of Bosnian refugees in its territory and had contacted UNHCR to study arrangements for hosting 150 families. In addition, the "white helmets", volunteers who were currently operational in the framework of various projects

already under way - as in Bolivia and Haiti - or under study - as in Angola or Gaza - would provide a valuable contribution to international humanitarian assistance activities in the form of prevention or emergency operations. Given that an increasing number of countries had established national white helmet teams, it would be advisable for UNHCR to use that capacity. Argentina, for its part, was at UNHCR's disposal to analyse needs in that regard.

45. He paid a tribute to the self-sacrifice of the staff of UNHCR and the highmindedness of the High Commissioner, whom he congratulated on her decision to establish the post of Deputy High Commissioner for General Policy, Planning and Operations.

46. Mr. YIMER (Ethiopia) said that, in the year that had elapsed since the last session of the Executive Committee, the situation of refugees throughout the world had worsened. The aggravation of the conflict in the Horn of Africa and the ensuing destabilization had made the problem even more complex. Several thousand Somalis had had to flee to neighbouring countries, including Ethiopia, which was currently hosting about 300,000 Somalis, 59,000 Sudanese and a sizable number of refugees from other neighbouring countries.

47. Ethiopia, which would continue to honour its obligations and abide by the provisions of the United Nations instruments and the Organization of African Unity conventions to which it had acceded, drew attention to the enormous strain on the areas in his country that continued to host refugees. The infrastructure, social services and environment in the refugee-hosting areas were being stretched to the limit. Although the Ethiopian Government was grateful to UNHCR for its encouraging initiative in that regard, it felt that the assistance being provided to Ethiopia in terms of burden-sharing was relatively inadequate as compared to the high number of refugees it was hosting. He appealed to UNHCR and the international donor community to redress that imbalance. Regarding the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees, he expressed gratitude to UNHCR: thanks to its assistance and cooperation, 967,000 Ethiopian refugees had been able to return home voluntarily and the repatriation operation was continuing.

48. Within the new structure of the federal Government, the Authority for Security, Immigration and Refugee Affairs was the sole body for refugee policy formulation based on United Nations and Organization of African Unity conventions and related protocols. It was reviewing the role, responsibilities and structure of the Administration of Refugees/Returnees Affairs (ARRA), UNHCR's main implementing partner, with a view to improving the implementation of refugee programmes.

49. While everyone agreed that repatriation was the most durable solution to refugee problems, it could only be so if it was supported by adequate recovery and rehabilitation assistance to returnee integration areas. Consequently, the approach to returnee assistance should be more comprehensive, taking into consideration not only the immediate needs of the returnees, but also the medium-term requirements. While the prospects for the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees were brighter than before the assistance, it must be ensured that the assistance given was proportional to their needs.

50. Regarding the repatriation of refugees currently being hosted in the country, Ethiopia had made its position clear on several occasions: it was ready to cooperate as soon as the situation in the countries of origin permitted the refugees' return in safety and dignity. At the request of a technical committee comprising representatives of donor nations and UNHCR, Ethiopia had made preparations for the repatriation of refugees in northwestern Somalia. The deadline for the conclusion of the operation had been set at 31 March 1995, but the violent clashes that had erupted in November 1994 had resulted in a new influx of refugees from northwestern Somalia into eastern Ethiopia. He reiterated his Government's readiness to cooperate in their repatriation when conditions were considered satisfactory.

51. As far as the Horn of Africa was concerned, his Government had always emphasized the need to find regional solutions to political, economic and social problems in the region. The Summit of Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Horn of Africa, held in Addis Ababa in 1992, had adopted a regional framework and a plan of action to deal with the consequences of the many man-made and natural disasters in the region, including refugee emergencies. The summit, which had been a landmark in regional cooperation, had led directly to the strengthening and expansion of the mandate of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). That organization would, in particular, build the capacity of the region to manage conflicts effectively, prevent or at least mitigate natural disasters and map out appropriate strategies for lasting solutions to the refugee crisis. Thanks to a revitalized IGADD, the Horn of Africa countries would find common solutions to common problems, including the repatriation of refugees.

52. Mr. MACRIS (Observer for Cyprus) said that the emerging picture of the refugee situation was a distressing one. The world had witnessed a dramatic increase in the many situations of conflict, resulting in ever larger numbers of refugees, displaced persons and persons in refugee-like situations. All those categories of persons were in urgent need of help. As the High Commissioner had stated the day before, in recent weeks, nearly half a million people had been displaced by war and violence in the former Yugoslavia.

53. The risks of conflict remained high throughout the world, including Europe, and every effort should therefore be made to prevent and defuse problems as early as possible. That should be a priority for the international community, especially for those nations that were in a position to exert a determining influence, as well as for the international organizations involved in humanitarian affairs. The dignity and worth of the human person, human rights and minimum standards should be upheld.

54. Turning to the report on UNHCR activities in Cyprus (A/AC.96/846/Part V/4), he said that the Government and people of Cyprus were grateful to the United States Government for its generous assistance to the UNHCR programme in Cyprus, in the amount of $10 million. He also expressed appreciation to UNHCR for its continuing role in coordinating assistance to the persons uprooted and displaced since the Turkish invasion in 1974 by expanding bi-communal projects and strengthening the relationship between the two communities. Despite the problems it had encountered during the period under review, Cyprus had discharged its humanitarian obligations towards needy and vulnerable refugees in accordance with the 1951 Convention and

the 1967 Protocol. In that regard, the Government of Cyprus had welcomed the holding of the Second Seminar on Refugee Law, organized by UNHCR in Cyprus in January 1995. The Seminar had promoted a wider understanding of international instruments on the refugee status.

55. His delegation expressed its high esteem for the High Commissioner's dedication in fulfilling her difficult task and to her able and devoted staff both at headquarters and in the field. A special vote of appreciation went to the Head of the Regional Bureau for South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, as well as to the UNHCR staff involved in activities related to Cyprus. It also thanked the UNHCR Chief of Mission in Cyprus, who had just retired after many years of constructive and fruitful cooperation.

56. Mr. LILLO (Observer for Chile) commended the High Commissioner on her commitment to refugees and thanked UNHCR for the valuable documentation it had prepared for the session, particularly with regard to international protection of refugees. Like the High Commissioner, who, in her introductory statement, had given a full picture of the humanitarian situation throughout the world, and like other delegations, Chile hoped that the first steps towards solutions to one of the most serious current conflicts, that of the former Yugoslavia, would rapidly have a positive outcome and that a lasting peace would be established in that area of unrest.

57. Chile also hoped that humanitarian activities on the African continent would have a positive outcome and pave the way for rehabilitation after the wave of violence that had hit Rwanda and other countries of the Great Lakes region. It was disturbing, however, to see the emerging tendency to interpret the concepts of refugee and asylum narrowly, without regard for the basic principles upheld by UNHCR, such as non-refoulement at borders, international protection and voluntary repatriation. Serious thought should therefore be given to the causes of refugee movements and political commitments must be reaffirmed in order to reverse those trends, which, were they to intensify, would not fail seriously to damage international solidarity and increase the dangers and suffering to which refugees were exposed. A disturbing dilemma affected the system of protection and humanitarian action: the fact that States granted asylum less often was less reflective of a decrease in deserving cases than of restrictive practices, as proved by the alarming increase in the number of internally displaced persons.

58. The prosecution for political convictions or opposition to a specific regime that had led to refugee movements throughout the cold war had quite often been followed by deficiencies in social development that had led to the serious humanitarian crises responsible for the current refugee movements which proved the importance of prevention. The most recent humanitarian problems were obviously the result of serious social tensions that required a response other than mere humanitarian relief. Such relief was undeniably crucial for saving lives at the worst moments of violence and action in that area should continue, but it was essential to seek durable solutions as part of a concerted effort to grapple with both the causes and the effects of mass movements of refugees and displaced persons. There was no doubt that many humanitarian problems would be settled if peace and security, as well as economic and social development, were established. More than ever, development and peace were interdependent. The causes of the recent tragedies

were: deterioration of the social situation, genocidal violence, serious damage to the environment, enormous health problems and ethnic and racial exclusion, all of which were indicative of the extent to which the security of the individual was held in contempt.

59. As he had said earlier, humanitarian assistance was not a substitute for investment in social development. Humanitarian assistance as currently conceived made it possible only for the beneficiaries to survive. Investments in the social field, which should be the basis for prevention, should make an effective contribution to preventing crises or at least reducing their frequency, while fostering human development. There was no doubt that such investment would prove to be more profitable in the long term both for donors and for beneficiaries. For that reason, United Nations bodies should cooperate with UNHCR to study the humanitarian tragedies that resulted from the serious problem of the deterioration of the social situation and to analyse the costs of humanitarian assistance activities as a whole, including the economic consequences of those tragedies in countries of origin and host countries, by comparing them to the effects that the allocation of the corresponding amounts would have on social development in those countries. If such a study was widely disseminated, it should have a positive effect not only for the definition of assistance policies, but also by raising public awareness of the advantages of long-term investment in economic and social development.

60. The mandate of UNHCR, the main coordinator of humanitarian activities, should be interpreted more broadly in order for it to be in a better position to respond to the increasingly serious problems of internally displaced persons. It was urgent for Governments to deal with that issue. The San José and Cartagena Declarations would be extremely valuable in that regard.

61. It was also essential to strengthen the foundations of UNHCR action by preserving the peaceful, apolitical and exclusively humanitarian nature of its work and continuing to guarantee respect for the principles of non-refoulement and non-return, individual voluntary repatriation, reuniting of families and continuation of international protection.

62. With the exception of its recent past, Chile was a country motivated by solidarity and had traditionally been a land of welcome and asylum. It was therefore prepared to respond favourably to UNHCR's appeal to States to host Bosnian refugees.

63. Mr. HADZIOUMERAGIC (Observer for Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina basically agreed with the principles and lines of action proposed by the High Commissioner and would cooperate with her in all of the domains covered. The principles, solution and expected problems were being studied by his Government. It had already taken some action. To facilitate the repatriation process, it had adopted several laws and programmes and defined specific procedures. Repatriation would be carried out in a programmed manner, under conditions of dignity, equality and security as far as possible. It would be performed in phases and safe areas. Displaced persons and refugees would have the right to recover property of which they had been deprived through ethnic cleansing and would be provided with appropriate support for construction or reconstruction of their houses. The

Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina would provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on rights, terms and procedures of repatriation for displaced persons and refugees. It was essential for that operation to be well planned, performed and monitored, in cooperation with the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without permanent coordination among donors, the Government and implementing agencies or organizations, results would be poor. The return of the most courageous, mostly from among the internally displaced was already under way in the direction of the liberated territories.

64. Everyone was aware of the consequences of the cruel Serbo-Montenegrin aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had resulted in 200,000 registered killed and missing, mostly Bosnians, and nearly the same number of wounded. More than 1.2 million persons had been expelled from their homes and over 800,000 had had to take refuge outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. More than 50 per cent of the housing supply had been destroyed, the economy of the Republic had been ruined and more than 3 million anti-personnel and other mines had been seeded throughout the territory.

65. Informing the Executive Committee of the problems his country's authorities considered to be the most important, he said that, first, the expulsion of the non-Serb population was continuing. As a result of the recent ethnic cleansing in the territories controlled by the Serb terrorists, more than 25,000 persons had been expelled into Croatia. No international organization had achieved any results so far in impeding that type of genocide. The Serb terrorists had begun officially to proclaim that type of crime as their goal and had brought special paramilitary units from Serbia for that purpose. He urged UNHCR to take the necessary measures for the protection of the victims of such acts and to present evidence of the expulsion to the international tribunal.

66. Secondly, people in the enclave of Gorazde had been living in absolute isolation for four years and depended exclusively on UNHCR assistance. The humanitarian situation had deteriorated particularly in the past three months because Serb terrorists had been preventing aid convoys from reaching that region. The 70,000 inhabitants of that enclave had to be assisted immediately with food, clothing, footwear, medicine and fuel, as well as with medical evacuation; if they were not, the winter threatened to be tragic for many of them. They could not wait for a final peace settlement.

67. Thirdly, the authorities had not been able to resolve most of the problems of the tens of thousands of extremely vulnerable people from Srebrenica and Zepa, the safe areas delivered into the hands of the barbarians by the United Nations. More than 10,000 of them were still missing. More than 3,000 had been brutally killed by Serb terrorists. The search for the missing persons from Srebrenica and Zepa had failed; neither UNHCR nor ICRC had done substantial work in that area. He urged them to trace, register and protect those persons. In addition, the accommodation problems of the displaced persons from Srebrenica and Zepa had not yet been resolved and the Task Force for Srebrenica and Zepa should step up its activities.

68. Bosnia and Herzegovina felt that most of the humanitarian organizations and the key countries of Europe continued to deal with the conflict in the former Yugoslavia as if it were a civil war or an ethnic and religious war.

That false and dangerous assumption had prolonged the suffering and would complicate the resolution of the problem in both the political and humanitarian fields. Reading the papers for the Executive Committee's session, listening to the speakers and following the mediation process for peace in the region, he had a definite feeling that there was a "half-way approach to the problem". In order to pacify the instigators and perpetrators of the worst kind of atrocities to be committed since the Second World War, care was being taken not to cut the Gordian knot, to dismantle the Fascistic regime of the terrorist Serbs of Pale. Yet according to a CIA report in March 1994, 90 per cent of the atrocities in the region had been committed by Serb military or paramilitary troops or local warlords. It was unimaginable that a civil society could be established if the most dangerous threats to it were not eliminated.

69. The future would prove whether the international community was able to take a real step in the direction of pacification of the region in order to lay the groundwork for reconciliation and democratization. If not, everyone - beginning with Europe - would be facing the greatest challenge imaginable to prevent the spread of fascism and a chain reaction in the Baltic States, Moldova or anywhere else.

70. He urged the humanitarian organizations to follow the peace process closely, to ask for a clearly defined framework in which to act and not to permit politicians to impose almost impossible conditions, putting the role of UNHCR, ICRC or other agencies at stake. Innocent civilians would ultimately be the victims of restrictive policies formulated by short-sighted politicians.

71. His Government fully supported all those who were struggling for a just and durable peace that would pave the way for reconciliation and democratization not only in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also in the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia. Lastly, he paid tribute to the UNHCR and NGO staff who had worked tirelessly in the past four years to improve the conditions under which the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina lived.

72. Mr. SLIPCHENKO (Observer for Ukraine) said that the international community continued to face a host of problems related to refugees and mass forced population movements, which had reached critical proportions and affected the majority of countries. Not all of the new challenges could be efficiently dealt with by utilizing the traditional legal and organizational approaches and Ukraine supported the call of the High Commissioner continuously to revitalize UNHCR's thinking and review its working methods.

73. Ukraine was deeply aware of the acuteness of the global humanitarian crisis. It had to cope with the problems that had been inherited from the past or had emerged as a result of the new circumstances. It had been serving as a safe haven for tens of thousands of refugees from the zones of armed conflict in the neighbouring States of the former USSR, as well as for refugees from other countries. It was conscious of its moral obligation to ensure them protection and assistance commensurate with its present socio-economic resources. For that purpose, the Parliament of Ukraine had adopted a law on refugees which corresponded to the basic international norms in the field and had established State bodies to implement it and elaborate

the corresponding legal procedures. His delegation hoped that the UNHCR office established in Ukraine would be able to increase the scope of its activities and give more substantial assistance to those bodies.

74. The preparations for the Regional Conference on Refugees in the Commun of Independent States should give new impetus to cooperation between Ukraine and UNHCR. Ukraine shared the assessment, contained in the information note submitted by the Secretariat, of that process as one of a humanitarian and non-political character aimed at devising an integrated strategy for the CIS region through the drafting of a declaration of principles and a program of action. He attached special importance to the follow-up to the Conferenc in order to ensure that its decisions would not remain a dead letter. It wa also critically important for the above-mentioned strategy to reflect both t short-term, immediate needs of the countries of the region and their long-te objectives, as well as of solution-oriented and preventive aspects, thereby enabling the countries of the region to cope with migration problems. It wa equally clear that their present and future endeavours in that area, which were essential for regional and global stability, called for the adequate support of all interested States and the international community as a whole. The discussions to follow the preparatory meetings should be even more focuse and dynamic, so that the Conference might be convened by mid-1996 at the latest.

75. The preparatory process had led to better understanding by Ukraine's partners of one of the most poignant problems facing Ukraine and its people, the continuing repatriation of the peoples formally deported from the territory of Ukraine by the past totalitarian regime of the former USSR. Since the early 1990s, Crimean Tatars, Germans, Greeks and others had been returning on a massive scale, most heading for Crimea, which had already accommodated 240,000 Crimean Tatars and 12,000 representatives of other ethni groups. Many more were ready to follow in their steps. The sheer number of returnees indicated the dimension of the work to be performed to integrate them, especially in view of the complicated economic and socio-political environment. The seriousness of the situation had long been recognized by the Ukrainian authorities, who had regularly allocated financial resources, notwithstanding severe budgetary constraints, and provided material assistance to returnees in order to facilitate their reintegration and preserve an atmosphere of peace and tolerance on the Peninsula. Recent conclusions of the Human Rights Committee had noted Ukraine's positive record in that respect.

76. In addition to the measures already taken to develop adequate infrastructures and guarantee the former deportees their political rights, the Government of Ukraine had elaborated a State programme for the resettlement of the Crimean Tatars and other former deportees that would not only contribute to their adequate protection, but would also envisage the creation of new jobs and conditions favourable for the revival and development of their culture. At the same time, recent unrest in the Crimea had highlighted the inadequacy of the financial support available to provide for their resettlement and meet their basic needs.

77. The problem of the formerly deported peoples obviously transcended the boundaries of Ukraine and dialogue should continue with the States where deportees had been residing for over 50 years and to whose well-being they had

made significant contributions, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, the Russian Federation and other States, with a view to signing the corresponding agreements and strengthening cooperation. So far, Ukraine had been left on its own to meet the cost of resettling the deportees, which for the Crimean Tatars alone was being estimated at over $250 million. No other State but Ukraine had ratified an agreement on the issues pertaining to the restoration of the rights of the deportees signed in 1992 by the CIS countries. The President of Ukraine had proposed that that problem should be considered again at the forthcoming CIS Summit. Ukraine saw that there was a significant role to be played by UNHCR and other specialized United Nations agencies in raising international awareness of the gravity of the situation, as well as through direct involvement on the basis of a coordinated approach embracing Ukrainian institutions, international organizations, NGOs and the donor community. A positive outcome for those endeavours would serve as an example of an effective strategy of prevention.

78. Mrs. RODRIGUES (Observer for Mozambique) said that, owing to the successful conclusion of the preparatory work for the first general, multi-party elections to be held in Mozambique, more than 1.7 million Mozambicans had returned to their country in one of the largest repatriation operations ever carried out successfully by UNHCR. The returnees were participating enthusiastically and with determination in projects aimed at their social and economic reintegration and, consequently, at national reconstruction. Mozambique again thanked UNHCR, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and donor countries, which had made the success of the operation possible. In addition to the demining operation, the reintegration of the returnees, internally displaced persons and demobilized soldiers was a big challenge and a capital factor for the consolidation of peace and democracy.

79. She drew the international community's attention to the importance of providing continuous support for the last stage of the UNHCR programme in Mozambique, which was basically geared towards projects with an immediate impact on the reintegration of returnees and focused on the creation of basic services in returnee areas rather than on the beneficiaries themselves, with a view to creating a bridge towards medium-term and long-term development programmes. Those activities were scheduled to be completed by June 1996, but there was a funding shortfall of $13 million. If that gap was not covered, the activities would have to be cut down drastically, with severe and unpredictable consequences.

80. Despite the enormous economic and social adversities Mozambique was experiencing, peace and stability in the country were leading to a continuous movement of foreign citizens seeking asylum. Over a short period of time, more than 200,000 asylum-seekers from different African countries had entered Mozambique. If Mozambique was to meet its international obligations, its capacity to do so would have to be strengthened. Committed to humanitarian principles, the Government had decided to create, with support from UNHCR, an Eligibility Committee responsible for accelerating the process of awarding refugee status.

81. Mozambique would never forget the solidarity it had enjoyed from the neighbouring countries and the international community during the dramatic

period it had experienced. It was prepared to contribute, with the lessons learned from its past, to the search for solutions to the conflicts that were claiming thousands of lives and causing massive population displacements. It was concerned at the intensification of political and military conflicts in Asia and Europe, more specifically in the Great Lakes region and the former Yugoslavia, but it continued to trust that the concerted efforts of the warring parties themselves and the international community to find solutions for eliminating the causes of those conflicts would yield positive results.

82. Mr. BADJIE (Observer for Gambia) said that, in view of the civil wars, conflicts, unrest, persecution and other forms of disasters that were constantly increasing the number of refugees and displaced persons throughout the world, UNHCR's role should not be limited to protection, provision of basic humanitarian assistance, creation of resettlement areas or repatriation. It should also endeavour to learn the root causes of crises and how to stop them; participate in the signing of peace accords and cease-fires and deal with other pertinent problems such as the infringement of refugees' human rights. One particular problem facing UNHCR and its collaborators was the need to differentiate between economic migrants and genuine refugees. The burden of economic migrants on UNHCR and countries of asylum would be considerably reduced by the introduction of effective screening systems.

83. Despite the fact that Gambia was not a member of the Executive Committee and also ranked low on the UNHCR list of priority countries, it too was faced with refugee problems. Historically known for the peace that reigned in its territory and the generosity of its people, Gambia was hosting refugees from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal, not to speak of the Gambian returnees. The nearly 1,000 Sierra Leonean refugees had fled mainly from the Kino area as a result of rebel activities. They had begun to arrive in February 1995 and were mostly grouped in the upper river division where the UNHCR Dakar office was building a camp for them. Their repatriation would depend on the outcome of the general elections to be held in their country. The Senegalese refugees had fled their country as a result of the rebel incursion in the part of their country called Casamance. They numbered more than 1,000, most of them disadvantaged women and children who had little chance of being able to return home if the Senegalese Government and the rebels did not sit down together at the negotiating table. The Liberian refugees had first begun arriving in 1989 with the beginning of the conflict in their country. Because of their small number, they had initially been housed in the Red Cross headquarters and later allowed to live in the Gambian community. The Gambian returnees and displaced persons were mostly of the Sarehulle tribe who had travelled to Sierra Leone and Liberia in search of greener pastures. They had begun to return home when they had no longer felt safe in the above-mentioned conflict areas. Statistics showed that they were about 6,000 in number and that over 50 per cent of them had been born in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

84. Gambia had divided the needs of those refugees and returnees into two categories: immediate needs (foodstuffs, clothing and health care) and long-term needs (children's education and income-generating activities, including the promotion of self-sufficiency and agriculture). It hoped that UNHCR would provide them with vocational training to prepare them for their future life. In Gambia, the key players in refugee affairs were the Government, the UNHCR Dakar office, the Gambia Red Cross and the

Anglican Mission Development Ministries. The Government allocated lands for settlement and provided security and protection through UNHCR, the police and immigration services. The refugees had access to national hospitals and clinics.

85. The Government had recently demonstrated its interest in the refugee programme by donating 3,000 bags of flour to the Gambia Red Cross. UNHCR, through the Gambia Red Cross and the Anglican Mission Development Ministries, was currently involved in registering refugees and provision of basic needs such as food and shelter. The Gambian authorities also relied on cooperation from the World Food Programme. The statistics on refugees and displaced persons in Gambia might give the impression that the situation did not need serious attention and assistance from UNHCR. However, the hosting of refugees and returnees still put pressure on the country's meagre resources. With that in mind, he appealed to UNHCR to consider increasing and improving its assistance to those groups.

86. Lastly, he joined the previous speakers in urging UNHCR to take note of the constructive criticism made at the current session of the Executive Committee concerning the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects. He also urged the international community and donor countries to be more tolerant, patient and accommodating to host countries and refugees and to help UNHCR to tackle its refugee problems amicably and the United Nations to provide a better world for mankind.

87. Mrs. MHLANGA (Lesotho) said that, since the disappearance of apartheid in South Africa, the number of persons seeking political asylum in Lesotho had been reduced to a trickle, but that did not mean the problem of refugees from South Africa had been fully resolved. The continuing unrest, especially in the Province of Kwazulu Natal, necessitated a high level of vigilance on the part of Lesotho, which considered itself honour bound by its international obligations. The situation in Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, Angola, Sudan and many other countries was also disturbing. Lesotho's refugee policy was governed by the 1983 Refugee Act and the 1986 Refugee Regulations, which aimed especially at responding to emergency situations. Under the 1983 Act, an Interministerial Committee had been established for the determination of refugee status; it processed applications and registered persons who had been recognized under the Act as refugees and advised the Minister on refugee-related issues. The lull in refugee applications had caused a slackening of that Committee's activities.

88. It was the Government's policy to integrate the refugees into society rather than to put them in camps. Those with skills were encouraged to set up their own businesses or to be gainfully employed to be able to support themselves. The majority of the refugee community currently in Lesotho consisted of persons internationally recognized as refugees and offered political asylum elsewhere, but who stayed in Lesotho for educational purposes. They originated principally from Uganda, Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire, thus showing that the distance between countries was not a deterrent to asylum-seekers. The nearest countries did not often provide the security needed by asylum-seekers, and that tended to cast doubt on the principle of the country of first entry as relevant for refugee consideration. The Government had been working closely with the Lesotho Council of

Non-Governmental Organizations, which was coordinating the Partnership in Action Programme (PARinAC) in an effort to close existing gaps and draw up well-defined action plans. The UNHCR Deputy Regional Representative had recently visited Lesotho and promised to provide the immigration officials who received asylum-seekers with much-needed training, which would help them treat asylum-seekers humanely and enable them to distinguish between genuine refugees and opportunists.

89. Mr. MWEISUMO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the situation in Africa, which had the greatest number of refugees and displaced persons, had continued to deteriorate. In the Great Lakes region in particular, poor countries had been forced, by an accident of geography, to receive an enormous case-load of refugees exceeding 2 million people. Faithful to its record of hospitality in providing sanctuary to successive waves of Mozambican, Angolan, Zimbabwean, Namibian and South African refugees fleeing colonial and racial oppression, the United Republic of Tanzania was at present hosting about 1.4 million refugees, mostly from Rwanda and Burundi. That had placed serious strains on the country, especially with regard to the environment and the social and economic infrastructure. The situation was aggravated by the fact that a number of undesirable elements, militiamen or even instigators of the massacres in Rwanda, had managed to slip in among the asylum-seekers, sowing the seeds of hatred and anarchy on Tanzanian territory by terrorizing genuine refugees and preventing them from returning home and by frightening the Tanzanian population in the villages close to the camps. In addition, there had been clashes with the Burundi army, which had ultimately led to the closure of the border between Tanzania and Burundi.

90. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania was convinced that the only viable and durable solution for refugees was repatriation to their country of origin. The implementation of the principles agreed at the Nairobi and Bujumbura Summits on Refugees in the Great Lakes region would go a long way towards creating conditions for a durable peace in the region. In particular, the international community should implement the decision to set up safe corridors and safe havens inside Rwanda under international supervision as a way of encouraging refugees to return home. UNHCR could play an important role by building confidence among refugees and persuading them that it was possible to return to the safety zones without fear of reprisals.

91. As part of its efforts to seek a durable solution to the refugee crisis, the Tanzanian Government had provided facilities for the setting up of the International Tribunal for Rwanda. It was also willing to undertake the exercise of separating those suspected of having organized and perpetrated the genocide and political assassinations in Rwanda from genuine refugees so that the former might be tried either in Rwanda itself or by the International Tribunal in Arusha. To do so, however, it would need financial and logistical support from the international community. There was unfortunately a tendency for the international community, when dealing with the refugee crisis, to consider that the weaker countries of asylum should live up to their humanitarian obligations at the expense of their national rights and interests. However, was the primary duty of a State not to preserve itself and protect its citizens and their rights? The international community must respect that right without bias or double standards. Tanzania proudly felt

that it had played its role fully with regard to refugees, albeit in very difficult circumstances, but it appealed to donors to continue helping it fulfil its obligations, particularly in the area of repatriation.

92. Mr. BIN GHANEM (Observer for Yemen) said that, as the previous speakers had stated, the increase in armed conflicts, ethnic clashes and human rights violations throughout the world was causing a constant increase in the number of refugees, which required the international community to step up its efforts to curb that phenomenon. He fully subscribed to the conclusions contained in the documents submitted to the current session of the Executive Committee.

93. As a result of the many disasters that had hit the Horn of Africa, Yemen had had to receive tens of thousands of refugees. The Government had mobilized to provide them with humanitarian assistance, despite the burden of the return of 1 million expatriates following the Gulf war. In cooperation with UNHCR, the Yemeni Government had begun regrouping those refugees in certain regions and providing genuine refugees with cards entitling them to assistance and protection. It also focused on facilitating their voluntary return to safe areas in their own country.

94. Yemen, which had been one of the first countries in the Middle East to sign the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, hoped that the Executive Committee would give due appreciation to its efforts to settle the refugee problem locally. It hoped that UNHCR would help it bear that heavy burden by increasing its financial assistance and seeking durable solutions for all the refugees.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.